

The Newberg-Dundee Police Department Traffic Safety Team along with the Newberg Graphic Newspaper has decided to devote a column to traffic safety every quarter in an attempt to minimize common violations committed by drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Two common questions we routinely answer are about vehicle auxiliary lighting, when it's allowed or appropriate, and Oregon Insurance requirements.

Lighting : Driving towards a car with both headlights, and fog / driving lights can be blinding to other drivers. It can be compared to driving towards a car with its high headlight beams activated. Fog lights are designed to be used at lower speeds in low visibility, snow situations, heavy rain or mist. Fog or Auxiliary lights should be mounted lower than 54 inches, and can be only white or yellow in color, if you plan on using them on any highway.

If your car is manufactured with auxiliary lighting, it's important to be familiar with the on / off switches and how to use them. If you are planning to install aftermarket auxiliary lights, it's important to read the manufacturers standards, and if they market their products for street use, or off road use only.

According to Oregon Revised Statute 811.515 : " Whenever the driver of a vehicle approaches an oncoming vehicle within 500 feet or follows another vehicle within 350 feet, the driver must use a distribution of light or composite beam so aimed that the glaring rays are not projected into the eyes of the oncoming driver." So in order to comply with this law, drivers are reminded to use their vehicle's low beams only, when an oncoming vehicle approaches.

Insurance : State of Oregon Law requires all drivers to carry proof of at least liability insurance for their motor vehicles. Liability insurance is insurance that provides protection from claims arising from injuries or damage to other people or property.

Unfortunately one of the negative effects of the current United States economy is the inability of many Oregonians to purchase car insurance. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, as many as one in six drivers in the United States does not have auto insurance. The problem is that on average uninsured drivers cost Americans \$4.8 billion dollars each year in damages, which in turn increases insurance costs for everyone.

Oregon Law requires drivers to carry a current insurance card with them in their vehicle. It's mostly important when you are involved in a crash and are required to exchange information. If you are driving uninsured and are involved in a crash, your driving privileges can be suspended by the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles. If you are involved in a crash and give false information about liability insurance to a police officer, it is actually a Class B Misdemeanor crime.

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